

SYLLABUS

GOVT 2301/2302 American Government: National, State and Local – HCC Northwest College – Katy Campus Adjunct Professor: Craig E. Ferrell, Jr.

Note: You need to print out a class schedule/calendar for GOVT 2301, CRN 53343 & GOVT 2302, CRN 51980 separately. They are to be utilized in conjunction with this syllabus.

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I will respond to your email communication as soon as possible but like most of you I am not available 24 hours a day 7 days a week. Emails will not be checked after 5:00 p.m. weekdays, M-TH, nor after 12:00 p.m. on Fridays so please be aware that you will not receive a response after those hours until the following business day.

Website: <http://learning.hccs.edu>

Office Hours: By appointment only. Normally I will be available 15-30 minutes before class and/or we can talk after class for short consultations. Please feel free to contact me concerning any problems you may be experiencing in this course. Do not wait until you have received a poor grade before talking with me. I will make myself available to listen to your concerns and to discuss strategies for improvement. Your performance is very important to me and with proper preparation and some old fashioned hard work you can and will succeed in this course.

On a personal note I want to welcome you on a journey we will take together this semester as we explore politics and American government. Fasten your seatbelts and get ready to learn!

Required Texts:

- American Government: Roots and Reform, 2011 Texas Edition, by Karen J. O'Connor, Larry J. Sabato, Alixandra B. Yanus (New York: Pearson Longman).
- MyPoliSciLab (www.mypoliscilab.com), which includes practice tests, multimedia activities, and more to reinforce your understanding of the textbook.

Note: This book is utilized for both Govt. 2301 & 2302 and can be purchased at the NW, SW, SE, or NE College bookstore locations. **It is sold pre-packaged with a required course supplement** called MyPoliSciLab. You also have the option of purchasing only the MyPoliSciLab supplement with the textbook in an electronic format (e-textbook).

If you plan to purchase the textbook elsewhere, make sure you purchase the correct version and that you get both the textbook and MyPoliSciLab. MyPoliSciLab can be purchased directly from the publisher with or without the e-textbook.

Students are also encouraged to reach beyond the textbook and gather information on current political events from different resources and share it with the class.

Companion Resource Website:

<http://www.mypearsonstore.com/bookstore/product.asp?isbn=0205076726&xid=PSED>

Classroom Contract: Expectations and Obligations: This syllabus is a contract between you, the student, and me, the professor; it provides an agreement stating my expectations, how a student should proceed, and how I will evaluate each student.

For you and I to succeed this semester it will require self-discipline and hard work on both our parts but in the end it will be worth it.

Please understand that adult behavior is expected at all times. Disruptive behavior/activities that interfere with teaching and/or learning will not be tolerated and may result in an administrative withdrawal without refund. Minor issues may result in your removal from the classroom for the day.

STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES (SLO's) FOR GOVERNMENT 2301 & 2302:

The Objective and Goal of Government 2301 & 2302 as a *Core Curriculum* course is to familiarize students with the structures, function, and processes of American government and politics. One must understand the origins of American government to be able to fully understand the issues facing the United States today. We will be exploring the philosophical and historical roots of American politics, the three branches of government, and various political institutions like the media and political parties. We will also study the different types of local governments and how they intersect with our Texas Constitution and our unique quest for individual freedom we so dearly cherish in Texas.

Successful students will be engaged students/citizens who can:

- Establish broad and multiple perspectives on the individual and their relationship to the larger society and world in which they live;
- Evaluate the impact of government on the lives of individuals and society as a whole, focusing on public finance, regulatory policy, civil rights, civil liberties, criminal justice, foreign policy, and defense policy;
- Understand the election systems of American government;
- Identify and describe the key functions of the three branches of government: the legislative, executive and judicial branches at both national and state levels;
- Trace the development of the U.S. and Texas Constitutions from their drafting through the present;
- Identify and evaluate information sources for political news, data, and opinion, including newspapers, websites, television, radio, and social media;
- Stimulate a capacity to discuss and reflect upon individual, political, economic, and social aspects of life in order to understand ways in which to be a responsible member of society;
- Develop a capacity to use knowledge, technology and science to positively affect their lives;
- Assess the causes and consequences of different forms of political participation, and understand the ways in which individuals and groups can affect political outcomes in the United States;
- Use logical reasoning in problem solving;

- Understand the interrelationships of the scholarly disciplines and how they affect each and every one of us in society; and perhaps most importantly
- Develop personal values for ethical behavior.

Student Measurement: Social Sciences comprise at least 15 semester hours of each student's core curriculum. Essential to the learning process in the social sciences disciplines are at least six basic intellectual competencies. These include:

1. **Reading:** Reading at the college level means the ability to analyze and interpret a variety of printed materials-books, articles, and documents-within the contemporary context of the discipline. A core curriculum should offer students the opportunity to master both general methods of analyzing printed materials and specific methods for analyzing the subject matter of individual disciplines.
2. **Writing:** Competency in writing is the ability to produce clear, correct, and coherent writing adapted to purpose, occasion, and audience. Students of government and political science need to be familiar with the writing process: how to discover a topic; how to develop and organize it; and how to phrase it effectively for their audience. These abilities can only be acquired through practice and reflection.
3. **Listening:** Listening at the college level means the ability to analyze and interpret various forms of speech communication.
4. **Speaking:** Competence in speaking is the ability to communicate orally in clear, coherent, and persuasive language appropriate to purpose, occasion, and audience. Developing this competency includes acquiring poise and developing control of the language through experience in making presentations to small groups, to large groups, and through the media.
5. **Critical Thinking:** Critical thinking, or intellectual reasoning, which is necessarily exercised in those competencies described above, is the ability to organize and analyze ideas and data using logical methods. —Data here includes written texts, visual presentations, artifacts, and experimental and statistical material. Critical thinking embraces methods applying both qualitative and quantitative skills analytically and creatively to appropriate political subject matter in order to evaluate arguments and to construct alternative strategies. Problem solving is one of the applications of critical thinking, used to address an identified task.
6. **Computer Literacy:** Computer literacy at the college level means the ability to use computer-based technologies in communicating, solving problems, and acquiring information. Core-educated students should have an understanding of the limits, problems, and possibilities associated with the use of technology, and should have the tools necessary to evaluate and learn new technologies as they become available.

All students enrolled in this class should have college level math, reading, writing and basic computer skills. If you do not have these skills, please consider enrolling in developmental classes offered at HCCS.

ATTENDANCE:

- Students are expected to attend class ON TIME. Always be respectful of my time and your fellow students by coming to class on time.
- If you come in late, please do so quietly and sit in the back.
- Class attendance is checked daily at or near the beginning of class, and attendance affects a student's success. If you come in after the roll has been taken you will be considered officially absent for that day but are allowed to attend and participate in the rest of the class.
- It is the responsibility of the student to drop a course for any reason; however, the instructor has the full authority to drop a student for excessive absences (6 hours or excessive tardiness).
- Historically poor attendance records tend to correlate with poor grades. Students are responsible for all materials covered during their absences; it is the student's responsibility to consult with the professor for a missed exam or assignment. Make friends with your fellow students, and get the notes from them if you must miss a day.
- Your vacation plans and personal conflicts with other classes or classes at other colleges/universities are NOT considered excused absences.

STUDENT CONDUCT: All students in HCCS courses are required to follow all HCCS Policies and Procedures, the Student Code of Conduct, the Student Handbook and relevant sections of the Texas Education Code when interacting and communicating in classroom activities with faculty and fellow students.

- Students who violate these policies and guidelines will be subject to disciplinary action that will include your removal from the course or campus.
- Be respectful to your fellow students and your professor. This includes but is not limited to showing up on time, staying through allotted class times, not eating in class, and making certain that cell phones and pagers are turned off at all times.

HCC TUTORING: Students should check with HCC Counselor's to see what kind of assistance is available and at which of our campuses.

Professor's Responsibilities:

- Provide the grading scale and detailed grading formula explaining how student grades are to be derived;
- Facilitate an effective learning environment through class activities, discussions, and lectures;
- Give a description of any special projects or assignments;
- Inform students of policies such as attendance, withdrawal, tardiness and make up tests;
- Provide the course outline and class calendar (separate from the Syllabus) which will include a description of any special projects or assignments; and
- Arrange to meet with individual students before and after class as required.

Evaluation of your Professor: At the Houston College, professors believe that thoughtful student feedback is not only useful but necessary to improve teaching and

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learning. You will be asked to answer a short online survey of research-based questions related to your professor and the instruction you received. The anonymous results of the survey will be made available to your professors and division chairs for continual improvement of instruction. Look for the survey as part of the Houston Community College Student System online near the end of the term. Please take the time and effort to complete your evaluation.

HCC CORE CURRICULUM: The core curriculum refers to a set of courses in the humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences that are required of all freshman and sophomore students who are pursuing a bachelor's degree. The purpose of the core is to give all students a basic set of learning experiences regardless of their major. A majority of classes taken by community college students planning to transfer to a university will be core classes.

The core curriculum at Houston Community College includes 43 semester hours.

- Communication skills (9 hours)
- English literature (3 hours)
- Mathematics (3 hours)
- Natural sciences (7 hours)
- Social sciences (15 hours) State law requires that students have six hours of government (**GOVT 2301 and 2302**) and six hours of history (HIST 1301, 1302, and 2301—choose any two). **The core curriculum includes an additional social science course.** Students may select from a long list of anthropology (all but ANTH 2301), economics (all but 1301), geography, government, history, psychology, and sociology courses as well as TECA 1354, which is Child Growth and Development.
- Fine arts (3 hours)
- Cross/multicultural studies (3 hours)

Although the 43-hour core allows room for electives, students should be advised that their choices of electives depend on their major field of study.

Course Schedule/Calendar: Students must print out a copy of Government 2301, CRN 53343 and/or Government 2302, CRN 51980 Course Schedule/Calendar separately for use in conjunction with this syllabus.

Reasonable Accommodations: HCCS is compliant with the ADA and Sec. 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Any student with a documented disability (e.g. physical, learning, psychiatric, vision, hearing, etc.) who needs to arrange reasonable accommodations must contact the Disability Services Office at the respective college at the beginning of each semester. Faculty are authorized to provide only the accommodations requested by the Disability Support Services Office. To visit the ADA Web site, log on to www.hccs.edu, click Future students, scroll down the page and click on the words Disability Information. For questions, please contact the Northwest ADA Counselor for additional information and or assistance. **HCC-Northwest ADA Counselor: Northwest ADA Counselor -Mahnaz Kolaini 713.718.5422**

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS: The HCC and class attendance policies apply to all students regardless of residency status. Receiving a W in a course may affect the status

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of an international student's Visa. Once a W is given for the course, it will not be changed to an F because of a visa consideration. Please contact the International Student Office at 713-718-8520 if you have any questions about your visa status and other transfer issues.

HCC ILLNESS INFORMATION: HCC asks faculty, staff and students to practice good health habits. For example one of the best practices you can utilize is to wash or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer to clean your hands frequently.

HCC Course Withdrawal Policy: Students who take a course for the third time or more must now pay significant tuition/fee increases at HCC and other Texas public colleges and universities. At HCC it is an additional \$50 PER CREDIT HOUR. The purpose of this extra tuition fee is to encourage students to pass their courses and to graduate on time. If you are considering course withdrawal because you are not earning passing grades, confer with your professor/counselor as early as possible about your study habits, reading and writing homework, test-taking skills, attendance, course participation and opportunities for tutoring or other assistance that might be available. Also you should be aware that the state of Texas has passed a new law limiting new students (as of Fall 2007) to no more than six (6) withdrawals throughout your entire academic career in obtaining a baccalaureate degree.

If you feel that you cannot complete this course, you will need to withdraw from the course prior to the final date of withdrawal. This semester, for Second Start classes, the date is **Nov. 11th**. If a student has excessive absences after the last official drop date, the student will get an (FX) for the entire course.

As your professor it is very important to me that you succeed. To help students avoid having to drop/withdraw from any class, HCC has instituted an Early Alert process by which your professor may "alert" you and HCC counselors that you might fail a class because of excessive absences and/or poor academic performance. However, ultimately it is your responsibility to visit with your professor or a counselor to learn about what, if any, HCC interventions might be available to assist you – online tutoring, child care, financial aid, job placement, etc. – to stay in class and improve your academic performance.

Note: Students are now able to withdraw from one or more of their courses online. While it is still advisable that students receive good counseling prior to dropping one or more classes, students will no longer be required to "see" someone before they drop.

CHILD CARE AND COLLEGE: If you have children, plan ahead and visit the HCC and WorkSource Child Care Program website by clicking on the —Current Students link and then selecting the Childcare link under the —Student Support section.

CAMPUS CLOSURES: IT IS HURRICANE SEASON IN HOUSTON. Please check the HCCS website for campus closures due to inclement weather at the following:
<http://www.hccs.edu/portal/site/hcc>

ELECTRONIC DEVICES:

- HCC Policy states that NO electronic devices of any type are permitted in class (i.e. phones, pagers, recording, and photography) unless you have permission by the ADA office and then you must advise the professor in advance of their use.
- Note: “off” does not mean &/or include having an electronic device on vibrate or mute.
- Answer your calls and make calls before or after class!
- Students should not leave the class to make a call or answer one (or worse— answer a call in class). Appropriate sanctions will be imposed for any and all violations up to and possibly including receiving an (F) for the course.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY: Students are responsible for conducting themselves with honor and integrity in fulfilling course requirements. Penalties and/or disciplinary proceedings may be initiated by College System officials against a student accused of scholastic dishonesty. “Scholastic dishonesty”: includes, but is not limited to, cheating on a test, plagiarism, and collusion.

Plagiarism is defined as using and passing off as one’s own the ideas, data, or writings of another or presenting as one’s own an idea or product that is derived from an existing source.

Cheating involves fraud and deception for the purpose of violating testing, assignment and class rules. Students who improperly assist other students are just as guilty as students who receive the assistance. If two or more students submit work that is identical or nearly identical, in whole or in part, they are equally guilty of violating the academic dishonesty policy.

Collusion involves an agreement with another person to defraud another or to do or obtain something forbidden by law or in a student’s case by violating class and/or college rules and regulations.

In simplified terms, you are not allowed to:

1. Take unchanged passages (or slightly edited) from another person’s writing and portray them as one’s own;
2. Submitting a paper that includes paraphrases of another person’s writing without giving credit;
3. Having someone else write your paper for you;
4. Copying or using another person’s work during in-class writing or testing;
5. The unauthorized use of electronic devices during in-class writing or testing; and
6. Violating any testing rules.

Keep in mind also that whether you are cheating or not, not following testing or writing rules properly, such as communicating with your neighbor, leaving the testing room and returning or using a cell phone during a test will be construed as cheating. Additionally, removal of exam questions from the classroom will result in a failing grade of (F) for the exam and possibly for the entire course. Note: This is not an exhaustive list of all the forms of cheating on written work. If you are in doubt, consult with your professor. In other words always avoid the appearance of impropriety!

Possible punishments for academic dishonesty may include a grade of 0 or (F) in the particular assignment, failure in the course, and/or recommendation for probation or dismissal from the College System.

(See the Student Handbook for additional information)

ACT RESPONSIBLY:

- If you must leave class early, just inform the professor ahead of time so that he/she will know the situation and sit in the back on that day.
- If you miss any exams or assignments, it is your responsibility to come to the professor promptly to arrange for a make-up exam. Keep in mind that you must conform to the professor's make-up exam schedule in this situation. See attendance policy and testing policy for more information but be advised that no make-up exams will be given before November 11th and then be prepared because the make-up exam will be more difficult than the original exam.

To make a favorable grade in my class, you must:

1. Prepare for class -- read the textbook and participate
2. Attend classes
3. Take notes
4. Follow proper STUDY HABITS; and of course
5. Do all assignments and pass the Tests!

Keep in mind that if you practice these habits in the classroom, you will be prepared for how to behave and succeed in whatever "real world" employment situation awaits you outside of your college career. **College is not a means in itself it is a means to an end. Get the most out of it and enjoy the process!**

TESTS, QUIZZES, WRITING ASSIGNMENTS AND PARTICIPATION:

There will be 3 tests (including the Final Exam), 6 pop-quizzes, 3 writing assignments.

Tests: The first two tests are 100 points each and involve a combination of multiple choice questions, short answer questions and essays. Students are given 1 ½ hours to complete tests #1 and #2 and two hours to complete test #3 the Final Exam which is cumulative and is worth 150 points.

Quizzes: There are 6 unannounced 10-point quizzes. Quizzes consist of a combination of multiple choice questions, short answer questions and essays. **Note:** Your lowest quiz grade will be dropped from your final grade calculation....i.e. only the 5 highest quiz grades are counted therefore **NO** Make-up Quizzes will be offered.

Writing Assignments: There will also be 3 short writing assignments given worth 25 points each. Details related to the writing assignments will be discussed in class the day they are assigned. **Note:** Each day late turning in a writing assignment results in a one letter grade deduction.

Attendance and Participation: In an effort to encourage regular attendance and critical thought and analysis of course topics, there will time allotted for class discussion related to the course material. My evaluation will be in response to your feedback concerning the course readings and any assigned activities including MyPoliSciLab activities and videos. In order to do well on these daily assessments, students should fully participate in the class, complete all assigned readings and course activities. 1 point will be given for daily participation and a bonus of 3 points will be given for any student with perfect attendance.

Total possible points:

1st Test	100 points	20%
2nd Test	100 points	20%
Final Exam	150 points	30%
1st Writing Assignment	25 points	5%
2nd Writing Assignment	25 points	5%
3rd Writing Assignment	25 points	5%
5 Quizzes @ 10 points each	50 points	10%
Daily Participation @ 1 point daily	22 points	4.4%
Perfect Attendance	3 points	.6%
	500 Total Points	100%

****Extra Credit**** A maximum of 10 points of extra credit may be earned and applied to either the first or second exams.

HCC Grading Scale:

A = 100-90:	(450-500 points)	4 points per semester hour
B = 89-80:	(400-449 points)	3 points per semester hour
C = 79-70:	(350-399 points)	2 points per semester hour
D = 69-60:	(300-349 points)	1 point per semester hour
59 and below = F	(0-299 points)	0 points per semester hour

(FX) Students must attend 60% of classes or this new grade will be given for students who normally would receive an F and this grade could affect your State and Federal Student Aid Programs and pay back requirements.

IP (In Progress).....	0 points per semester hour
W (Withdrawal).....	0 points per semester hour
I (Incomplete).....	0 points per semester hour
AUD (Audit).....	0 points per semester hour

IP (In Progress) is given only in certain developmental courses. The student

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must re-enroll to receive credit. COM (Completed) is given in non-credit and continuing education courses. To compute grade point average (GPA), divide the total grade points by the total number of semester hours attempted. The grades "IP", "COM" and "I" do not affect GPA.

Extra Credit: Usually extra credit opportunities present themselves during the course of the semester. They are meant to expose a student to different areas that can enhance their learning experience outside of the classroom. Participation is totally voluntary on the part of the student and **you will be informed of these opportunities exclusively in the classroom so here again attendance is rewarded.** A maximum of 10 points of extra credit may be earned and applied to either the first or second exams; however, extra credit is NOT added to your final grade average for the exams or the class. Select your extra credit wisely, because once you earn 10 points you are not eligible for any additional extra points during the semester not listed above.